

# ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

## December 15, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Aaron Wright, Chair, Ian Magnuson, Vice Chair, Dr. Gail Walter, Eric Brown, Joe Bower, Sharon Dever, Wayne L. Bond, Dr. Melliush, Bobby Glasser, Rob Liekis

**EXCUSED ABSENCES:** Nicole Olween

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:** No unexcused absences.

**STAFF:** Amber Jane Schneider, Recording Secretary; Jamie McCarthy, Development Project Coordinator; Nolan Bergstrom, Amanda Cockroft and Andie Miller, I.T.

**OTHERS:** Dr. Kenneth Kornheiser, Kalamazoo River Watershed Council Vice President; Cheryl Vosburg, Executive Director of the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council; Jeanne Hess, City Commission Liaison; Lauri Holmes, Associate Member

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

- The meeting was called to order by Mr. Wright at 4:33 with 5 members, not quite quorum; however, Dr. Walter notified Chair Wright she will be tardy. Recording began 4:34 after confirming a quorum of 6 out of 11 current members.
- Recording/Streaming of the meeting was confirmed, with community members joining via a link posted on the City's Facebook page.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

- The agenda was approved with the following changes:
  - Added annual election of officers to the New Business.

### **APPROVAL MINUTES (OCTOBER):**

- The minutes were approved as written.
- The November 15, 2021 minutes will be further reviewed, and any additional corrections, additions or comments will be emailed to Mr. Wright within the next week and forwarded on to the recording secretary. The final version of these minutes will be voted on at the next meeting.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- No announcements.

### **NON-AGENDA COMMENTS BY OTHERS:**

- Public Comment:
  - David Wiggs, City of Kalamazoo resident: concerned with the overpopulation of deer. Feels it needs to be addressed for the health of the deer, the health of people, and for the environment. Repellents do not work for him. He is concerned with the biodiversity of plants needed for pollinators and birds. He's concerned the deer are unhealthy, starving, and miserable. Issues with deer-vehicle (including bicycle) collisions.
  - Christina Prouty, City of Kalamazoo resident: opposed to a deer cull.
  - Cheryl Barea, City of Kalamazoo resident: opposed to a deer cull.
  - Katherine Barber, City of Kalamazoo resident: opposed to a deer cull.
  - Tom Duffield, City of Kalamazoo resident: opposed to a deer cull.
  - Ebony Gared, City of Kalamazoo resident: deer management plans should not include culling as an option.
  - Rebecca Silence, City of Kalamazoo resident: opposed to any deer management plan that includes culling as an option.
  - Donna Keller, City of Kalamazoo resident: concerned with the overpopulation of deer. Diverse, native flora planted but unable to deter deer. This is having negative effects on other native fauna, such as birds and pollinators. Also concerned with health of the deer due to overpopulation. Also, with deer-vehicle collision.
  - Patricia Hollis, City of Kalamazoo resident: opposed to a deer cull. Interested in other non-violent options for deer management.
  - Chelsea Zanker, City of Kalamazoo resident: opposed to a deer cull.
  - David Denack, City of Kalamazoo resident: opposed to a deer cull.

- Tom Kempinski, City of Kalamazoo resident: opposed to shooting deer inside City Limits.
- Iris Potter, City of Kalamazoo resident: again, opposed to a deer cull option in any deer management plan.
- Michael Bishack, City of Kalamazoo resident: opposed to a deer cull.
- Katie Bloom, fully support culling the deer if it becomes necessary as a means of deer management.
- Andrew Gee, City of Kalamazoo resident: opposed to a deer cull.
- Mr. Wright noted he has a copy of all the emails he's received in the ECC shared drive.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- Sustainability and Climate Action Plan Update-Jamie McCarthy
  - With City's Community Planning and Economic Dept., coworker Nolan Bergstrom
  - As soon as its out will send to Chair Wright
  - Details in prep for the plan
  - Sustainability Plan, 10 goals, 28 strategies to accomplish these goals targeted plan of action connect back to goals. Details down to 85 actions needed to accomplish each of these strategies. A lot to happen in the next 10+ years.
  - Actions likely to change/shift over time. Not necessarily chronological.
  - 4 main chapters of the plan:
    - Goals 1-3: Accessible Connection Network
    - Goals 4-6: Affordable Efficient City
    - Goals 7&8: Healthy Prepared Community
    - Goals 9&10: Green Circular Economy
  - Six Strategies for Sustainability
    - Developed ranking in order to prioritize and select top Six Projects
    - Chose top 3 scoring strategies for each chapter
  - High Priority Wait List
    - High Priority strategies that fell to the bottom of the list (project that is extended, will require work past the 10 years of the plan, received lower feasibility score. Also if not yet an identified funding source, but key actions need to be doing now to be ready to launch in these projects and to also make progress and keep on the radar via these actions.
  - Mr. Bergstrom – Greenhouse Gas Inventory
    - Strive for but difficult to find partners/pool resources for building foundation and measuring greenhouse gas reduction
    - Building trust with partners (Consumers Energy) and data share agreements
    - Education institutions with resources and expertise above the City's capabilities
    - Initial inventory is community wide and holistic, would have been impossible without a graduate-student intern
    - Imagine Kalamazoo – leave comments on webpage throughout this entire process
    - Public Participation January-February
  - Question: What does the term "Green Stormwater Infrastructure" refer to? Answer: Using more natural "green" solutions to storm water infrastructure instead of typical gray catch basin underground infrastructure. The city has higher standards in NFP districts such as: rain gardens, swales, bio-solutions to stormwater. Ultimately leads to less direct discharge to surface bodies of water.
  - Question: Goals 4&5, should be flopped? Goal 5 should be a higher priority than Goal 4. Answer: not listed here in a prioritized way; can see the scoring in the report.
  - Question/comment regarding community engagement process and plan: in addition to the three, if publicizing as one thing, suggested to publicize final feedback in person at both an ECC meeting and City Commission meeting to be the last two steps as part of the plan. Answer: yes, would love to take public comment in that way. Seeking from the ECC a letter of support. Post this on the project page as well. Public participation is not wholly fleshed out but may need volunteer support as well. Noted for ECC members.
- Kalamazoo River Presentation-Dr. Kornheiser (Kalamazoo Valley River Watershed Council, KWRC)
  - The entire City of Kalamazoo is within the Kalamazoo River Watershed
    - Everything that happens within the city makes it to the river.
  - In addition, there are some tributaries within the city that also influences what happens to the river. Spring Valley Creek, Portage Creek, a portion of Davis Creek, and Arcadia Creek. What happens in these tributaries affects the Kalamazoo River.
  - The Kalamazoo River is much larger than what is seen in the city. There are two branches in Hillsdale and Jackson, they enter Calhoun County and Kalamazoo County, and then into Allegan County. But what happens in Kalamazoo is still very important.
  - Ms. Vosburg, as executive director, is the only paid permanent employee of the council.

- The Council mission is to restore and protect the health of the Kalamazoo River, its tributaries, and its watershed by collaborating with the community, government agencies, local officials, and businesses.
- The Council envisions a Kalamazoo River and connected waterways that are free flowing with good water quality and healthy ecosystems that are managed and protected by decisions and actions in the region and provide environmental, social and economic benefits. This will be accomplished
- Restore river by removing dams that are no longer functional
  - Actively power generating dams will not be removed
  - Morrow dam is an active dam
  - Morrow Dam – STS – subsidiary of Egle Creek, a subsidiary of Ontario Power – found gates in the dam that might fail, was a need to do an action it was determined there was going to be an emergency response necessary to draw the water down. Normally done in a controlled fashion with protections in place to prevent sediment from flowing downstream. Sediments collect and settle down in areas where not flowing. Morrow lake filled with sediment (natural process), large thick heavy deposits of sediment were in Morrow Lake, unfortunately not done properly sediments flowed downstream. They collect in slower places, along banks, where shallow sandbars and
  - 2019 – took away two major bass seasons
  - 2020 – first noticing issues (a little late)
  - Since then, minimal cleanup and response on part of Egle Creek
- Discussion of Draft Recommendation on Deer Issues
  - Jeanne Hess, commented on processes: a Committee of the Whole meeting would allow for all documents to be made public prior to any voting and mentioned that this is not something that will be addressed within the next year, so all documents would be public prior to any voting of the Commission and allow for public comment long before the letter would be addressed as an agenda item. Requesting documents to be made public is unnecessary; perhaps requesting the City Commission review the letter in a Committee of the Whole meeting is more appropriate.
  - Reviewed and modified the draft recommendation.
  - Final vote was: in favor: 8; opposed: 0; abstained: 2 and absent: 1
  - Comment: Dr. Walter and Dr. Melluish abstained as inclusion of some of the comments clouds the issue. They are concerned the comments regarding the public input is biased.
  - Removed the word “unanimously” and replaced with “majority”

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Officer elections
  - Chair: Aaron Wright
  - Vice Chair: Ian Magnuson
  - No abstentions or negatives. Approved.
- Expected to be in person starting January.
  - Cannot vote remotely, must show up in person for vote to count. Need a minimum of 6 voting members for a quorum.
  - Must wear masks and socially distance.
  - If desired to also broadcast live, IT staff will not be present to support this or to run the phone calls.
  - Phone calls will not be pre-recorded, but people may call in to comment live.
  - IT will provide on-site training for individuals willing and interested to learn how to broadcast prior to the first couple meetings.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

All reports were eliminated in this meeting due to time constraints.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

- The meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.